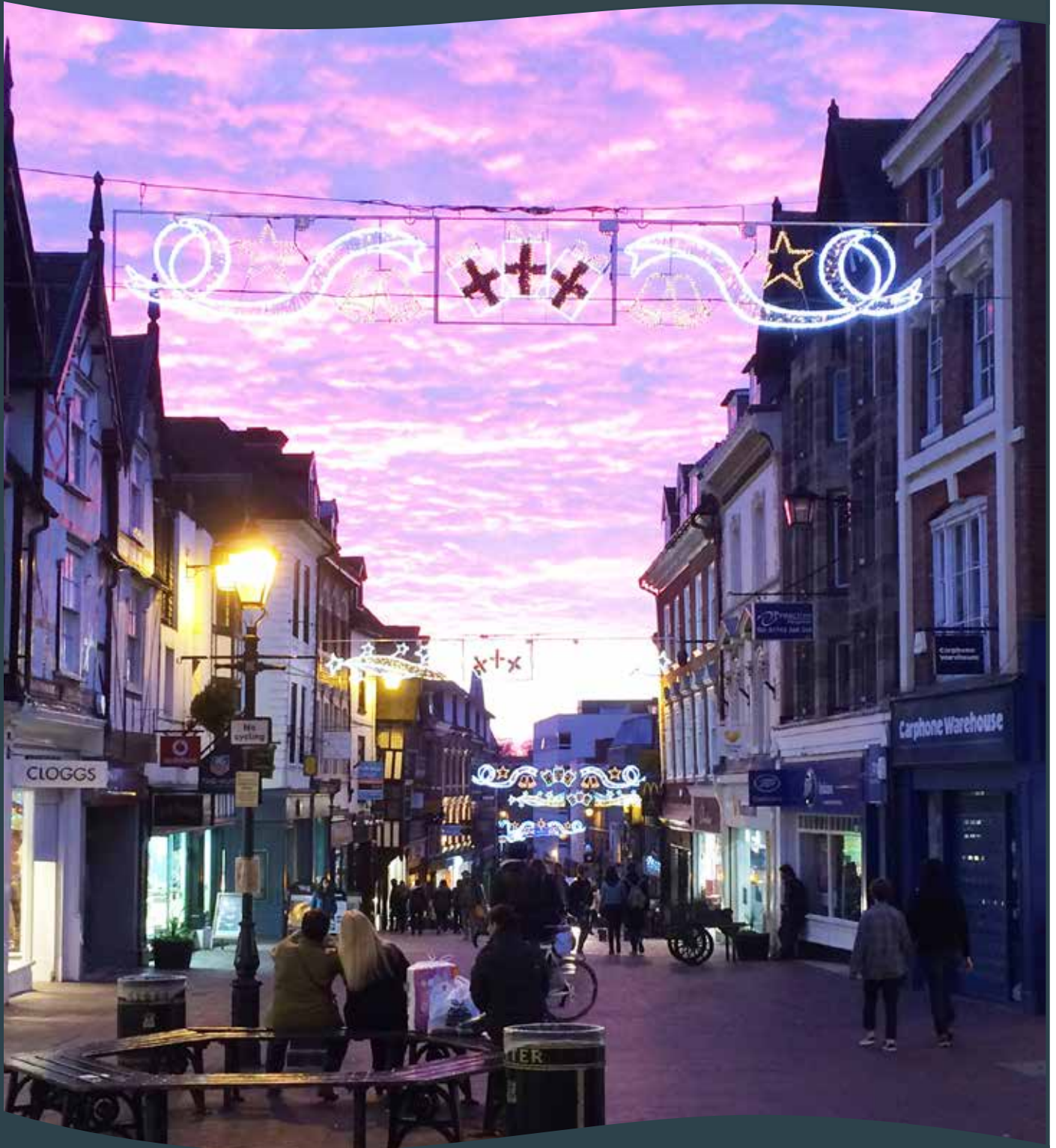




**SHREWSBURY**  
BUSINESS CHAMBER  
Chamber Magazine Issue 4 2016



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## President's foreword

Welcome to the Winter issue of the Shrewsbury Business Chamber Magazine. 2016 has been a great year for conducting business in Shrewsbury and throughout the UK. There is greater confidence to invest, businesses have grown, and local construction of housing and property developments have seen an upswing. Manufacturing and engineering are showing slower growth, but we are optimistic for 2017.

Over the last 40 years, the UK government has funded many of the academic subjects covered in the school curriculum at the expense of more practical 'hands on' subjects. This has left a generation lacking in technical, vocational and manufacturing skills paramount to the growth of business. Businesses must be prepared to provide high-quality apprenticeship schemes to encourage our brightest students to engage in the skills required for the country's success. The investment in infrastructure and apprentice schemes promoted by the government through Marches LEP and a selected number of large companies in the area is very encouraging. Looking to the future, this will also enhance our working partnerships with companies overseas.

Shrewsbury is fortunate to have a number of high-quality independent shops providing unique products and outstanding customer care with excellent personal service. Customers using the town are delighted with the expansion of the retail sector, which offers new shops opening and a prestigious store under construction. Shrewsbury is a beautiful historic town in a rural setting of which one can never tire. Many events are now established on the town calendar, bringing many new visitors into the town with disposable income for both trade and leisure activities, which in turn is boosting the name of Shrewsbury as a reputable tourist and business destination.

I am encouraged by the business communities' drive and enthusiasm, and look forward to the growth of opportunities that are being pursued to provide employment and wealth for the area.

*Peter Bettis  
President of the Chamber*

## Annual Christmas window competition

# CHAMBER CHRISTMAS SHOP WINDOW COMPETITION WINNERS ANNOUNCED

Shrewsbury Business Chamber and Shropshire Newspapers are pleased to announce the winning entries for their annual Christmas Shop Window Competition. Presentation of the winners' trophies took place at Hatchers



Solicitors on Friday, 16th December. Entries were sought last month for all four categories: Class 1 - Smaller Shops (up to 18' total frontage); Class 2 - Larger Shops (over 18' total frontage); Class 3 - Florists & Hairdressers; and Class 4 - Charity Shops. This competition has been held by the Chamber in the town for more than twenty years.

The winners of the four categories were Class 1: Masons Independent Financial Advisers; Class 2: Tanners Wines Ltd; Class 3: Hair Forum; and Class 4: Salvation Army Care & Share. Overall Winner was Hair Forum. Runners-up in the competition were Shoe b Do, Listers the Village, Chanelle Hair Salon and Age UK.

"The judges had a tough task picking the winners," said Peter Bettis, president of Shrewsbury Business Chamber, which runs the competition in conjunction with the Shrewsbury Chronicle. "So many people entered the competition with displays of high quality... it's a wonderful way to promote local businesses during the festive period, and the high standard of entries made judging difficult, with marking very close."



*The Christmas Shop Window Competition Class 1 trophy went to Andrew and Will Mason of Masons IFA, with Eva (Longden CE Primary School) and Poppy Mason (Meole Brace CE Primary & Nursery School) who made a major contribution to the winning display*



*The Class 2 trophy was awarded to Lydia McKenzie of Tanners Wines, who with colleague Chloe Parton put together this year's amazing display*



*The Class 3 trophy for the Christmas Shop Window Competition went to Lee Jordan-Bailey of Hair Forum, who also were declared overall winner with the most number of points*



*The Class 4 'Charity Shops' was presented to Carolyn Wood of Salvation Army 'Care & Share'*

New member feature

## WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS...

Shrewsbury Business Chamber has been representing businesses in the Shrewsbury area since 1903. As the main platform for businesses, membership of the Chamber is open to all business types. We recognise that the economy is a difficult one so we have kept our fees to a minimum, ensuring good value and good

services for members. We've introduced a new pricing structure so that home-based businesses can enjoy the benefits of full Chamber membership for a trial period of 12 months at a reduced rate, while student membership is free. For full details of our membership rate pricing structure, please see our website.

### Shrewsbury Railway Heritage Trust



*Shrewsbury Railway Heritage Trust  
01743 359853  
shrewsburyrailwayheritage.com*

The Shrewsbury Railway Heritage Trust is managed by an elected group of directors who meet monthly, and was established as a charity in July 2003 to: raise public awareness of the railway heritage of Shrewsbury and its region; advance the education of the public about the railway heritage of Shrewsbury and its region through lectures, publications and other means; collect, document, conserve and interpret material evidence of the railway heritage of Shrewsbury and its region for the public benefit; establish and maintain a museum for the care, display and interpretation of material evidence of the railway heritage of Shrewsbury and its region for the public benefit; and support the preservation and interpretation of historic buildings and other structures associated with the railway heritage of Shrewsbury and its region for the public benefit.

The Trust's Abbey Station project has involved the restoration and conversion of a 19th century derelict building, to create a Visitor Centre. The Centre will tell the story of the original railway on the site – The Potteries & North Wales Railway, and The Shropshire & Montgomery Railway – and is intended to be a useful community facility. The Trust invites local individuals and businesses to preserve and promote Shrewsbury's rich railway past. Individual membership is £10, and family membership £15.

### Members' news

## COLLEGE LEADS THE WAY IN ENGINEERING TRAINING

Following extensive employer-consultation and a robust and highly competitive bidding process, Shrewsbury College has been awarded a major local government grant, securing its place as a leading training provider of engineers. The Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (Marches LEP) has identified Advanced Manufacturing Engineering as a key priority sector within the region. Capital investment was made available for tender, aimed at developing the skills employers require within today's engineering industry.

"The West Midlands has seen the UK's highest growth in advanced manufacturing employment in the past twelve months," explains Principal, Lyn Surgeon. "In order to ensure that the region remains at the forefront of this developing sector, it is critical that Shrewsbury College retains its leading position in engineering training."

The award combined with investment from Shrewsbury College amounts to in excess of £600,000. The project has cemented the relationship between Shrewsbury College, Shrewsbury Sixth Form College, Staffordshire University, Caterpillar and Festo, which will be collectively known as the Shropshire Advanced Manufacturing Skills Hub.

"We were delighted to be informed that we were ranked as the number one bid in this process and to hear that we have been awarded a very substantial sum," adds Andrew Lee, Curriculum Leader in Engineering and the

driving force behind the bid. "It allows us to significantly extend our investment in state of the art equipment to suitably train the engineers of tomorrow. Students will be able to work in an entirely new product design and prototype suite running the latest 3D CAD software, new CNC Mills, CNC Press Brake, the latest welders capable of processes such as Flux Cored, Hydraulic, Pneumatic, Mechatronic and Electronic equipment."



*Andrew Lee (Curriculum Leader, Shrewsbury College); Lyn Surgeon (CEO and Principal, Shrewsbury Colleges Group); Matt Bulley (MD, Caterpillar Shrewsbury)*

This investment puts the College in the unique position of being able to offer a range of courses from basic introductory levels through to degrees, apprenticeships and bespoke training to meet individual company needs.

## REPORTED CRIMES TRIPLE



Figures which reveal the number of reported sex crimes against children has tripled in Shropshire over the past five years highlight the importance of bringing cases to the attention of police, says a Shropshire law firm. The figures revealed in the Crime Survey for England and Wales showed sexual offences against children had risen in Shropshire from 73 in 2011/12 to 241 in 2015/16. In Telford & Wrekin the figures rose from 123 to 310 in the same period.

Lawyers at Lanyon Bowdler Solicitors, who deal with a variety of cases of sexual abuse, said the increase in offences in Shropshire was significant but needed to be taken in context. Karen Clarke, Lanyon Bowdler's senior legal assistant in the firm's personal injury claims team, said: "Taken in isolation, these figures look worrying because one might think the number of actual crimes taking place has suddenly shot up. However, when you consider the context of victims being very unwilling to report cases in the past, it actually demonstrates an improvement in the way these crimes are reported and recorded... Ministry of Justice statistics released in 2013 showed only 15 per cent of victims ever reported sex offences to the police, so if more people are now reporting instances of abuse rather than hiding it, that should be viewed as a positive step forward."

## NEW LEADER APPOINTED FOR SHREWSBURY COLLEGES

Shrewsbury Colleges Group has announced the appointment of James Staniforth to the role of Principal and Chief Executive. The newly-formed Group, comprising of Shrewsbury Sixth Form College and Shrewsbury College, is Shropshire's largest combined A-level and vocational education provider since the July merger. Taking over from the Interim Principal and CEO Lyn Surgeon after Easter 2017, James Staniforth will join the Colleges Group from the 'outstanding' Strode College near Glastonbury, where he is currently the Principal. He brings substantial experience of the education sector including senior roles within Sixth Form and Further Education colleges.

He comments: "I am absolutely delighted to be joining Shrewsbury Colleges Group and to have the opportunity to work with the staff, governors and the community to move the College to the next stage post-merger. SCG has many unique strengths which will enable us to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the ever changing world of further education. I am absolutely committed to making SCG a centre of academic and vocational excellence and to develop a regional and national reputation for our work."



Members' networking

# CHAMBER ANNOUNCES FORTHCOMING NETWORKING MEETINGS

The Chamber's Events Committee has been busy finalising the ever-popular networking evenings at various venues in the town and surrounding area. All events are held on a Wednesday evening (usually the



third of the month) at 6pm, unless otherwise stated in our e-mails or on the event pages of our website. Our most popular venue is Origins Restaurant on London Road, which is attached to the College - do not miss the chance to sample

the food here, it is amazing!

Most events are free to members as part of their subscriptions - with a small amount (£5) charged to non-members and their guests to cover administration and catering. It's a great way to informally chat with other businesses in the area, and the Chamber always arranges for a speaker to present on



a relevant topic of the day. For instance, we were proud to host a well-attended EU Referendum at Shrewsbury College's Clayton Hall, compered by Eric Smith of BBC Radio Shropshire, featuring experts from a range of political and business backgrounds.

Our increasingly popular Flower Show networking breakfast attracted almost 70 this year, all of whom enjoyed a chance to see the Show before the general public entered on the first day. Stan Sedman



took us on a summer town tour of our historic streets and buildings, the new chief exec of Shrewsbury Town Football Club hosted and spoke to us of his plans for the season, and Shropshire Council and Veolia outlined their policies and services for businesses in the area. Keep an eye on the events page of the website for the latest dates on our networking calendar!



## NETWORKING EVENT CALENDAR

Our most up-to-date calendar of networking events can be found on the events page of our website, [www.shrewsburybusiness.com](http://www.shrewsburybusiness.com). Bookings for all events can be made via the links to Eventbrite.

Booking for most events is free to all members, with a small surcharge to cover administration and catering for non-members and guests. We look forward to meeting you!

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Venue</i>
January 2017 (date tbc)	Members' networking evening. Edwina Rowlands talking about City & Guilds	Origins Restaurant
Wednesday 15th February 2017	Members' networking evening	Origins Restaurant
Wednesday 15th March 2017	Networking evening/cruise aboard the Sabrina Boat. Speaker: Pete Lambert on the environmental issues of the Severn	Sabrina Boat
Wednesday, 19th April 2017	Members' networking meeting & buffet, speaker to be confirmed	tbc
Wednesday, 17th May 2017	Members' networking meeting & buffet, speaker to be confirmed	tbc
Wednesday, 21st June 2017	Members' networking	tbc
Wednesday, 20th July 2017	Summer barbecue	Salop Leisure
Friday, 11th August 2017	Shrewsbury Flower Show networking breakfast	Quarry Park



# CROWN WEALTH MANAGEMENT

We are a Chartered Financial Planning Firm of Independent Financial Advisers in Shrewsbury, providing financial planning and investment advice in the Shropshire and Mid Wales area.



[www.crownwealthmanagement.co.uk](http://www.crownwealthmanagement.co.uk)

## Members' news

### FOURTH YEAR FOR CROWN WEALTH MANAGEMENT IN TOP 100

Crown Wealth Management in Shrewsbury has been recognised as a top 100 financial planning firm by Citywire publication New Model Adviser for the fourth year running.

New Model Adviser is an industry leading publication that provides news, information, and insight for professional advisers around the world.



Brian Benson, Founder and Managing Director said, "we are pleased and proud to be recognised again as a top 100 financial planning firm, our goal has always been to provide a client focused service and be one of the best financial planning firms in the UK."

The company has just celebrated its tenth anniversary and has recently introduced the new role of Wealth Manager Assistant for Lewis Benson, James Benson and Eleanor Fitchett. This exciting opportunity will provide more client contact and an excellent platform to learn from the two Wealth Managers, Brian Benson and Nigel Walker. The seven-strong team now includes Brian Benson, Matthew Clegg, Nigel Walker, Eleanor Fitchett, Michelle Griffiths and Brian's two sons, Lewis and James.

## TOP RANKINGS FOR LAW FIRM



*Tom Devey*

Three departments and six lawyers at a Shropshire law firm have been featured in the latest edition of a prestigious independent legal guide to the country's best operators.

Chambers & Partners, which identifies and ranks the most outstanding law firms and lawyers annually, awarded three of FBC Manby Bowdler's departments – Agricultural & Rural Services, Family & Matrimonial, and Private

Client – the top possible status of Band 1.

The six Shropshire based lawyers in the guide were Telford based Anne Thomson, Head of the firm's Family department, and Elizabeth Cleverley, a Partner in the same team in Shrewsbury, Steven Corfield, who leads the county's Agricultural & Rural Services team at Shrewsbury, and his colleague Sarah Baugh.

Philip Cowell, a Partner in Telford's Family department, was given the status of a 'recognised practitioner' while Tom Devey, another lawyer in the Agricultural & Rural Services team, was ranked as 'up and coming'.



*Philip Cowell*



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## LOVE OF HIGH STREET ENDURES... BUT INVESTING IN IN-STORE TECHNOLOGY WOULD BOOST REGION'S SHOPS

*The enduring role of the British high street is revealed in new research by Barclays, with 25% of shoppers in the West Midlands still preferring to view valuable products in person before buying.*

- 25% of West Midlands shoppers still prefer to physically see valuable products before buying
- But shoppers are eager for new technologies: 29% in the West Midlands would be more likely to visit stores kitted out with smart fitting rooms
- Shoppers are now five times more likely to use Twitter to complain about purchases than three years ago, and one in three (38%) expect responses within an hour
- Two thirds want the protection of British retailers prioritised as part of Brexit negotiations.

As the retail sector prepares for the impact of Brexit, The Barclays New Retail Reality report uncovers a desire for a new form of high street that is more diverse and makes better use of technology, while revealing that two thirds of the UK population want the government to prioritise the protection of British retailers and goods in Brexit negotiations.

Sarah Offland, Relationship Director for Barclays Shropshire, said: "The British high street is part of what has made the UK great. Being a 'nation of shopkeepers' is ingrained in our cultural identity and consumer pride in the sector endures. Our research reveals that consumers in the West Midlands – in line with the rest of the country – still see the high street as an essential part of the shopping experience and as a national treasure they want to see protected.

"Consumer confidence in the retail sector is continuing despite uncertainty caused by the Brexit vote, and there are opportunities ahead for retailers if they can maximise the opportunity of 'Brand Britain', both at home and abroad."

### *Boosting the high street through technology and experiences*

Demand for a vibrant, diverse high street in the West Midlands remains strong. In the next 12 months, consumers in West Midlands are more likely to shop in the high street branch of a national retailer than from the same retailer online (80% v 78%). They are also more likely to shop in the high street branch of a local or independent retailer (77%) than use a subscription delivery service (17%) or the mobile app of an internet only retailer (22%). Yet with the majority of shoppers (80%) also planning to shop online at an internet specialist in the next 12 months, competition is clear. However, investing more on technologies in-store would give high street retailers a further boost. Appetite for smart fitting room technology is particularly strong in the West Midlands region, with 14% of shoppers citing

this as the technology they would like to see more of.

In another technological shift, shoppers are now five times more likely to use social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook to complain about a product than they were three years ago. And they want a quick response when they complain, with one in three (38%) expecting a complaint made via social media responded to within an hour.

To continue prospering, high streets also need to offer more diverse experiences. When asked what types of outlet people want to see more of on their high streets, more independent specialist retailers (44%) and independent cafes and restaurants (36%) topped the list. However, it is clear that shoppers remain price sensitive with discount stores (29%) being the third most popular option.

Sarah Offland added: "Consumer expectations are currently moving faster than retailer innovation. More investment is needed to keep consumers coming back for what they love – great British high street experiences. The conclusion from our research is that in the West Midlands the key to success for many retailers is to offer a balanced high street and online offering, taking advantage of technological innovation in store, including smart fitting rooms in particular to attract shoppers through their doors."



### *Post-Brexit retail opportunities*

The research also shows Britons to be proud of the retail sector and they want the industry protected during Brexit negotiations. Two thirds (64%) of consumers say they are proud of the service that UK retailers provide to society, and a similar proportion (65%) want the protection of UK retailers and goods prioritised during Brexit negotiations.

Overall, consumers are uncertain about the impact of Brexit on retail, but they do see areas of opportunity. Respondents are twice as likely to feel that the quality of groceries will improve post Brexit (28%), than not (14%)\*, likely reflecting a hope that Brexit will result in more UK-based sourcing. Respondents are also more likely to believe that the availability of goods will improve (24%) compared to just 12% who think it will reduce. Similarly, shoppers are optimistic that food labelling will improve (26%) compared to 12% who think it will get worse.

There are, however, specific areas of concern with survey respondents citing worries about the availability of certain categories of goods, with exotic fruits (62%), wine (55%), luxury goods (42%) and cheese (40%) topping the list.

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Members' news

**BARCLAYS QUIZ RAISES FUNDS FOR HARRY JOHNSON TRUST**



Barclays recently held its annual quiz at the Shrewsbury Town Football Club, with 30 teams entered – a mixture of businesses and professionals across the town and surrounding area.

£1920.58 was raised during the event, which Barclays matched pound for pound. The funds raised went to the Harry Johnson Trust.

Winners were once again Hatchers Solicitors, with the prizes given out by John Pitchford, Head of Barclays Corporate for Shropshire.

**COLLEGE MARKETING TEAM GAINS NATIONAL RECOGNITION**



The Shrewsbury College marketing team was recently awarded a prestigious silver award at the national College Marketing Network Awards for their

innovative summer recruitment campaign.

The campaign, featuring current and former students from the College, posed the question: "What's Stopping You?" encouraging people of all ages to consider undertaking courses at the College. This is the third national marketing award the team has received. The College is Shrewsbury's largest vocational course provider, offering over 350 courses ranging from diplomas to university level courses.

"We are delighted that the campaign achieved its objectives with overall recruitment numbers increasing versus last year," comments Charmian Turner, Marketing and Admissions Team Leader.

"We were very pleased to be able to use real-life case studies featuring many successful former students of the College who are now embarking on impressive careers."

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## IT ENGINEER ACHIEVES DREAM



A Shropshire IT engineer has achieved his dream after completing his first Ironman triathlon in just over 12 hours. Andy Perry, 41, of Church Stretton, first decided he wanted to do an Ironman when he was at school and his Duke of Edinburgh teacher showed a video of the championships in Hawaii.

Years later he completed the slightly less exotic Ironman Wales in Pembrokeshire in 12

hours, 16 minutes and 51 seconds.

He said: "Ever since I was young it's been on my bucket list, and being 40 last year I had a small midlife crisis and thought I could recapture my youth – and I couldn't afford a Porsche. The male 40–45 age category is the largest one – I wonder why!"

An Ironman involves a 2.4 mile swim, which Mr Perry completed in one hour, one minute and 42 seconds, a 112 mile bike ride which he finished in six hours, 30 minutes and 39 seconds, followed by a marathon, which Mr Perry ran in four hours, 23 minutes and 45 seconds.

Mr Perry, who works for Network Support Solutions, which offers a range of IT services, products and support services, followed a 30-week training programme.

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## SHREWSBURY TOWN IN THE COMMUNITY RECEIVES FUNDING FOR DISABILITY SPORT PROJECTS

Shrewsbury Town in the Community has received funding from the Wembley National Stadium Trust to help boost its disability sport projects.

'Every Player Counts' was recently launched, where the likes of former England defender Danny Mills, Paralympians and Disability Minister Penny Mordaunt were present to celebrate the £1.1 million nationwide scheme. The main aim of the scheme is to get more disabled people playing football, and breaking down the barriers that have previously prevented them from doing so. WNST trustees have awarded 23 grants to 25 clubs, with the amounts being spread out over three years.

Shrewsbury Town in The Community has been granted £54,200 towards their disability sport programmes, which will go towards curriculum time coaching in SEN (Special Educational Needs) Schools, build more teams more specific to their disability (e.g. a deaf team) and help make provisions more sustainable.

Head of Community Jamie Edwards said: "It's something that I'm very passionate about. We've taken great strides over the last two years but this has really been able to take us to the next level.

"It's great to have a partnership with Severndale School, where we're going in during curriculum time which will in turn have an increase in the amount of participants that we have.

"It's all about being inclusive, and its very difficult when you're coaching if you've got a varied amount of disabilities which we do have with our PAN disability – some people will have an advantage over others."



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Members' news

## AUDITEL MAKES 'MASSIVE DIFFERENCE' TO CHARITY'S COSTS



Established in 2006, Park Lane Centre is a community building and registered charity in Telford. Its core purpose is the improvement of health, education and lifestyle of the local community, which has a high level of deprivation.

Centre Manager Jacqui Idiens says, 'We've been badly affected by cuts to local services and the council introduced me to Auditel cost management specialists, Adrian Burton and Neil Crook. We thought we had been overcharged on our utilities and they said that they might be able to help us – and so they did!'

Water: significant amount of rebates going back over many years. Total: £23,629.

Gas & electricity: recovering overpayments over the last four years. Total: £26,423.

Annual savings: between £9,000 and £10,000.

## LAW FIRM ON TRACK WITH UNIVERSITY SPONSORSHIP DEAL



A Shropshire law firm has unveiled a new sponsorship deal to keep the University of Wolverhampton's Formula 3 team on the winning track.

FBC Manby Bowdler has signed a three-year agreement with the team that will include sponsorship of the F3 Cup racing car, an annual bursary for one female engineering student and an engineering prize to be awarded in the law firm's name.

The University of Wolverhampton Racing Team offers an important opportunity for students to gain industry experience working as a professional team in competitive motorsport. It is part of the University's commitment to produce graduates who can apply both theory and practice in industry.

University of Wolverhampton Racing recently finished second in this season's MSV F3 Cup. The team competed at world famous tracks such as Spa-Francorchamps, Brands Hatch, Donington Park and the home of British Grand Prix, Silverstone. A £12 million investment in the University's engineering facilities at its Telford Innovation Campus in Priorslee is currently underway.

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## COLLEGE RECEIVES DEFENCE FORCE RECOGNITION



Shrewsbury College has been recognised as a major supporter of the Armed Forces and their families, by being awarded the prestigious Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) Silver Award by the General Officer

Commanding Regional Command, Major General Richard Stanford and the Deputy Commander of 11 Signal and West Midlands Brigade, Colonel Richard Maybery.

The awards ceremony was held at The Library of Birmingham and hosted jointly by West Midland Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association and 11 Signal and West Midlands Brigade. The scheme encompasses bronze, silver and gold awards for companies that pledge, demonstrate or advocate support to the Armed Forces community, and align their values with the Armed Forces Covenant.

"This is a real honour," said Catherine Armstrong, Group Vice Principal Curriculum Support and Business Development at Shrewsbury College. "The College is totally committed to supporting service personnel and to encouraging our students to get involved with the armed forces through a variety of schemes, including our dedicated Public Uniformed Services courses and the army cadet scheme."

## LAW FIRM 'LINKS' UP WITH NEW APP TO ENHANCE CLIENT EXPERIENCE

A Shropshire law firm has become one of the first in the Midlands to sign up to a new app that aims to revolutionise its interaction with clients. FBC Manby Bowdler has rolled out The Link app, a dedicated communications application specifically designed for law firms and their clients, amongst lawyers at regional offices in Telford, Shrewsbury and Bridgnorth, as well as Wolverhampton and Willenhall.

It was the brainchild of former BBC The Apprentice star Lauren Riley. A qualified solicitor herself, she devised the new approach after witnessing first-hand that changes were needed in the legal industry, with customer service at the heart of it. The app allows lawyers to keep clients up to date with the progress of their case, reducing the need for constant phone calls, emails and letters, which provides a time and cost saving for the firm. It gives solicitors and clients round the clock access to essential case information within a secure environment and all interactions are automatically recorded, meaning there is no need for file notes.

Designed as a stand-alone or integrated system, it operates with bank level security to offer peace of mind for clients. Managing Partner Kim Carr said incorporating The Link app into the firm's communication systems would add an enhanced and more responsive service to clients.

"Our main driver as a firm is to deliver stellar service and we pride ourselves on putting the customer experience at the heart of our business. We know clients engage with us in different ways and the development of The Link app

will provide another avenue for them to communicate with us and keep up to date on the progress or developments in their case."

Kim added: "For our customers, it is easy to use and offers value added from a service delivery perspective. For us, it has reduced the time spent on phone calls providing updates, confirming appointments, and is generally assisting us in supplying a more intelligently delivered and cost effective service."

FBC Manby Bowdler scooped the Customer Champion title at this year's Shropshire Star Excellence in Business awards, was named Professional Services Firm of the Year at the recent Wolverhampton Law Society awards and won the Excellence in Customer Service award at a recent Black Country Chamber of Commerce presentation.



### New year, new branding, new website?

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## HARRY JOHNSON TRUST WINS BUSINESSES FOR CHILDREN AWARD

A Shropshire charity has praised the county's Businesses for Children Awards for helping it raise its profile in the year since it won an award at the ceremony. The Harry Johnson Trust was declared the 2016 winner of the Children's Charity Award, which recognises Shropshire charities helping to improve the lives of children and young people. Since then, Sally Johnson, who lives in Vennington, Shrewsbury, and set up the trust with her husband Stephen, said the charity's work has become better known in the county, meaning more support has been available for families with a sick child.



The couple started the charity after their son Harry, seven, died from double hit non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, a cancer so rare that at that time only three other children in the world had the same diagnosis. The trust provides children diagnosed with cancer and referred to Telford's Princess Royal Hospital with a little box, a Harry's hamper, full of useful everyday items that

families may have forgotten to pack. It also pays for families to have a holiday in Shropshire, so they can remain near the child's medical team as well as lots of other thoughtful gifts, such as vouchers for the hospital cafe, new pillows and toys. The charity also received £550, raised by guests at the ceremony in a 'heads or tails' game.

Mrs Johnson said she couldn't believe it when The Harry Johnson Trust was declared the winner in its category at the BCAs. She said: "When our name was announced as the winner of our category, we were overwhelmed... it was great to use the award to be able to publicly say thank you to everyone who has supported the trust since it began."

Mrs Johnson said the charity now hopes to become more visible in other parts of the county such as Telford, Ludlow, Oswestry, Welshpool and Bridgnorth.

## THE PERFECT GIFT FOR LITTLE TOWN FANS...

As Christmas fast approaches why not give the little Shrewsbury fan in your life a present that they will remember for the rest of their lives? With plenty of home games still with spaces available, this is an excellent opportunity to make their dreams come true, let them meet their heros and run out onto the hallowed Greenhous Meadow turf.

As a mascot you will get:- two complimentary tickets for the game (additional tickets can be purchased); a full STFC kit; exclusive opportunity to meet the players and talk with the management team; VIP tour of the dressing room and player area; enjoy a kick about on the pitch pre-match; an opportunity to have photos with the players on the pitch.



The Shrewsbury Town Mascot Package costs £150 (£90 if kit already purchased). For further details, call Richard Hill on 01743 289177 ext 210, or email [richard.hill@shrewsburytown.co.uk](mailto:richard.hill@shrewsburytown.co.uk) for more information.

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